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“So Far From All We Love’: Letters from the Lobdell Family, Civil War Refugees from West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana.” *Chronicles of Smith County, Texas* 46 (2015): 37-45.

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“So Far From All We Love”: Letters of the Lobdell Family, Civil War Refugees from West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana by Vicki Betts

By late 1862, John Little Lobdell, age 71, of West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, knew it was time to move his family and property west, out of the way of advancing federal armies. Across the river, the city of Baton Rouge had fallen on August 5. Upriver, the town of Bayou Sara had been burned by the federal navy on October 25. The first stop was Natchitoches where they stayed a year. However, in the spring of 1863 General Nathaniel P. Banks pushed his army up the Teche River and on as far as Alexandria, too close for comfort, so Lobdell looked to East Texas for safety. He found a small community in southeastern Smith County, called Canton at the time but now known as Omen, purchased land, and returned to Natchitoches to move his wife, Anne Stirling Lobdell, originally from West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, daughters Catherine, age 24; Sarah, age 18; and Annie, age 11, and son John L. Lobdell, Jr., age 15, plus an unknown number of slaves.¹

Canton had been founded in 1851, only twelve years previous, near the intersection of the Laris-

sa-Shreveport road and the Tyler-Henderson road. By 1863 it boasted at least five stores, a hotel, a school, two doctors, a church building shared by the Methodists and Cumberland Presbyterians, a Masonic lodge, a blacksmith and a tanyard. It must have seemed very rustic to this planter family more accustomed to St. Francisville, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans, but it held one major attraction—it was far from federal lines.²

This set of letters is part of the Lewis Stirling and Family Papers at the Louisiana State University Archives. They were written back home to Anne Stirling Lobdell's mother and brother in West Feliciana Parish. Besides the detailed description of refugee life in Smith County, the last two letters are notable for the discussion of negotiations with the newly freed slaves, their contract for a year's labor in exchange for assistance in returning home to Louisiana. Anne also writes about how freedom seemed to have affected her relationship with the family's former slaves, both their attitudes and hers.

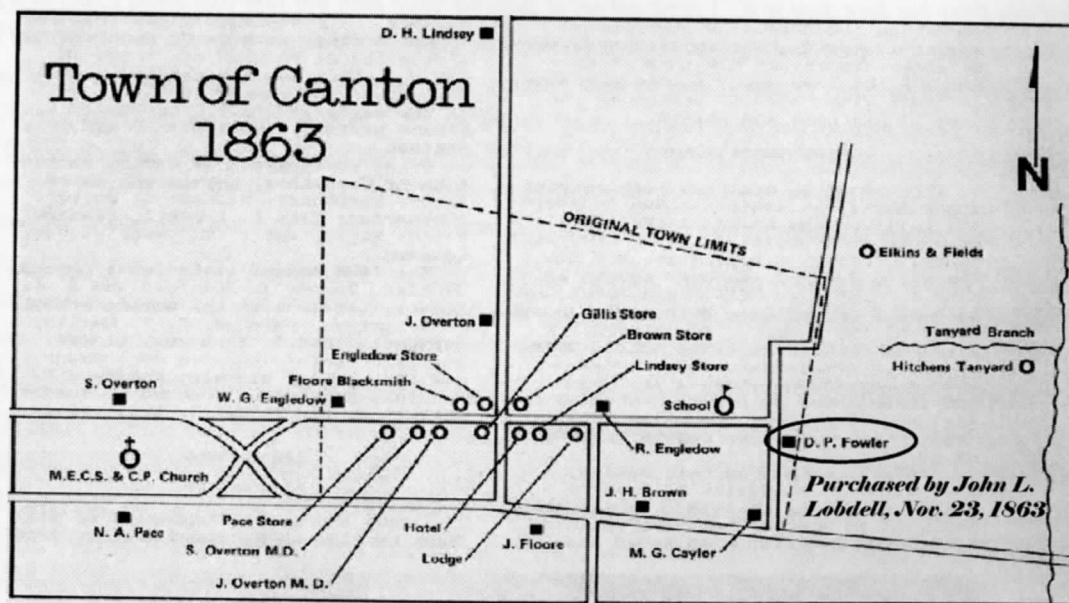


Figure 1:
Originally published
in *Chronicles of Smith
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p. 12.

Natchitoches Dec. 25th 1863³

My Dear Mother,⁴

Mr. Winter⁵ has kindly offered to take letters for us, and I gladly avail myself of it to write, as it may be a long, long time before another chance presents itself to us, way off in Texas I think there will be little hope of seeing any one going your way, and there is no dependence to be placed in the mail. I feel like breaking up another home, but Lewis encouraged me to hope that they have found a better one in Texas, and if it were not that we go so much farther from you I would be well satisfied. I will give you Mr. Lobdell's description, he bought two farms one contains 700 acres, good land, level, a considerable portion fenced in, an uncommonly fine gin house gin stand and corn mill, about 350 acres cleared, 100 seeded down in wheat, 50 in Rye & Barley the price of \$17,500 was paid in exchange for Grace and her family (6, two grown)⁶ and his note for \$1000, the dwelling house and cabins on that place are not very good made of logs.—the other place consists of 372 acres of creek bottoms, 163 acres near and adjoining & 102½ acres joining the first place in all say 200 acres open and under fence, 60 acres seeded down in wheat and about 30 acres in other grain, on these lands are not much improvement in buildings, but separate on town lots in the village of Canton is a dwelling house of four rooms, and out buildings, which he expects to live in.⁷ Lewis⁸ intends living on the first place & is trying to persuade Kitty to keep house for him but she won't promise yet, the price of the last property was \$15,000 and paid for in exchange for Henderson & his family (wife & three little children), Ritka [?] & her son Wilson⁹ and his note for \$1750. they had to go right to building cabins for the negroes and Lewis remained there two or three weeks to get them well under weigh [sic], having the only Gin and Grist mill in the neighborhood he had when I left been able to feed their [head?] from the toll,¹⁰ and had made a half bale of cotton, his shoe makers were making shoes at 6 dollars a pr¹¹ and the cooper was engaged to make barrels (whisky barrels) at 20 twenty dollars a piece¹² the price for flour barrels is 10 dollars. the Texans are all eager to hire negroes¹³ and will pay high for mechanics. John Hereford¹⁴ has decided to take his mother's negroes over there and hire them out he will probably write to her by Mr. Winter he and Lizzie have been with us for several months and trying to go to her Father's but he has had a great deal of trouble in getting a conveyance, he had to have a wagon made, it is not yet finished. When Mr. L started to Texas he lent him Randal¹⁵ J. took him to a wagon maker who had agreed to let him have the wagon in three weeks if he would furnish him some help. Randal did the most of the work and did manage to get the iron work and wheels done in that time then the body was to be made he brought it to Natchitoches for that and it is only in the last two days that any thing has been done to it. Lizzie got out of patience while John was gone and asked Lewis to try some other workmen than those John had engaged. L found another and sent for the wagon when the man concluded to work on it and promised faithfully to have it done by next Tuesday, then the curtains are to put on to that John can't be ready to start for Texas with us, but thinks he can get off in two weeks. I want to leave here on Tuesday or Wednesday at farthest. the weather I am afraid will be worst in January and we will be obliged to camp at night and be two weeks at least on the journey.

I am glad to hear that there is plenty of water on our place there are three springs and a well, it has been one great trouble here, all our drinking water had to be hauled three miles.

We have been hearing from you frequently lately and I feel very much encouraged that as you have borne up under the first great troubles you may be able to stand it hereafter. I do pray to see you again and dear old Aunt Bell.¹⁶ I have felt anxious to hear from her, Kitty and Annie both mention in their last letters that she has been very ill, but I was glad to see they had heard she was getting well give my love to her and ask her to think of me and mine sometimes.—tell Kitty that I hope she has been receiving my letters to her, she had never acknowledged them but I always thought that it might be cause she had other things to write about until Kitty L. said she was afraid her Aunty would think I

had neglected to write to her it has always happened that her letters went by mail and just before I had an opportunity of writing, when I would send to another, but they are all intended for you all, any how, and I beg that some will feel that I mean to make exceptions. Kitty and I had quite an excitement last night, we were all invited to "Soiree" with Mrs. Prudhomme and K and I went first. Mr. P. said he would come up and walk down with Lewis & John but had not been gone long when he came in and said that some more of our acquaintances had come, two gentlemen had asked him if Mr. Lobdell lived here & one of them was very tall, I asked him if he was large, with light hair & blue eyes and he said he was not very large but very tall, we started him off to hurry them down there and his son began to describe them, 'I tell you, he says that one is tall, more tall than Mr. Lewis and Mr. Clark, his legs come down most to the ground he is on a little horse—we were here it was Ruffin¹⁷ but could not account for his being there and riding a small horse & were very impatient for them to come. Kitty wanted to run off herself to meet them but I was afraid it might be strangers—Then they came they were Dempsey Cain¹⁸ & Young Brown¹⁹ of West Baton Rouge. D. was looking for his Father he had heard that his father was dead. Capt. Cain is in Texas not far from our place²⁰ and doing very well in the money line but (among ourselves) is not well thought of, some one was telling Lewis about him who did not know that L. knew any thing of him, he said he was the meanest man he ever heard of, if he takes any one in at night he charges exorbitant rates poor old man I expect he wants to try to make up some of his losses and thinks he is where none of his acquaintances will ever hear of him. 'tis a pity Ned Cain is not with him Dempsey says he looks very badly, is thin, would not weigh more than 120 pounds,²¹ he told me too that Mary Rhea's²² twins were dead he said he went in to Mary Buffin's, saw Sarah Winter²³ and did not like to tell her that he had called there by mistake. he went on to day and promises to see us in Texas if he returns I may have a chance to write again but Lewis thinks it doubtful if he returns. Hilary asked me to give his love to his Uncles and Aunts and to tell them that he is doing very well only he has but one child left, the others died of hooping [sic] cough and measles. he says he likes Texas better than this place but not so well as the Mississippi that place he says was good soil. Tuesday.—I expect Mr. Winter here to night and he will take the stage here tomorrow night for Alexandria. I fear we will not get off this week as Lewis says he can't get ready. I feel impatient to be gone but suppose I shall have to submit. let them direct letters to us—Canton, Smith County, Texas. if a friend brings them over and mails them in either Alexandria, Natchitoches or Shreveport they may reach us. Kiss them all for me. dear Mother if you have to leave your home come to me in mine, it will always be yours.

ever your affectionate daughter

A. M. Lobdell

Canton Aug. 9th 1864

Dear Unc²⁴

I have been promising myself to write to you for a long time but have been prevented from doing so by going to school and by not knowing whether you were at home. They all received letters from home the other day but poor me, but the news from them satisfied me that you were all well, still I can't help saying that I was disappointed at not receiving a letter. I have fever nearly every night²⁵ and am so weak that my hand trembles as I write. Pappa is up this morning but he is very weak and the pain in his side troubles him a great deal. Sisters Kitty and Sarah went to spend a few days at a Refugee's²⁶ and while there the ladies went with them to see a vinyard²⁷ [sic] near them, they say that it is a beautiful place, Sister Kitty speaks particularly of an arbor, she says that she could not see anything but vines and leaves until she got under, when she could see grapes hanging very thick. She brought home a few catamba grapes and a few apples with her, the grapes were very fine. Young Mr. McLain sent me an invitation to come up and spend a week with him, and that we will go to see Mr. Ross and his vinyard [sic]. I think that I will go as soon as I am well enough. We have a fine prospect for corn, brother has been having the fodder²⁸ pulled, and it shows itself very plainly, brother brought in two ears, one had 1004 and the other 1005 grains; we have been having rains lately very frequently, when did it not

rain in the time of pulling fodder? The wheat crop is not as good as we expected, as we only made 1000 bushels, wheat commands a good price here from 15 to 20 dollars per bushel, but brother's detail will take all we have to spare, and even if it does not, we will not be allowed to sell to any one but to soldiers families and to the government and then only at government prices.²⁹ I don't know exactly what the prices are. Brother is making a good deal of tobacco this year, he is now taking the leaves off the stems, and getting ready to press some of it, he can sell that, at an enormous price, it is now selling at twenty dollars per pound, both men and women use it, it is perfectly disgusting to see the women take snuff, they have a box full all the time and use it with a stick they dip this stick in the box and then put it in their mouths,³⁰ several have offered their boxes to Sarah, and I have seen the young girls at school use it. I wish you would make up your mind and come out I think you would do well with your practice, and if you cant bring yourself to do that come out and see us and spend a month or two. Tell Catherine that the next time I write it will be to her, and tell Cousin Annie that her "trash" as she calls it, is more interesting than she gives it credit to be, tell Mother that I would write to her if I thought it would interest her. Kiss all the little ones for me, and remind them that there is such a person as cousin John. Excuse this miserable scrawl, as it was written (I might almost say) in the dark, while the flies are at their worst, and while I am under the influence of quinine.

With love to all I remain your affectionate nephew
John L. Lobdell

P.S. Brother³¹ says he is very much obliged to you for your last letter, that he is under many thanks, that he was greatly interested. Tell Wesley, Nannette sends her love, and howdydo, and thinks that he might have written to her before now, as it has been nearly four months since she wrote to him.

And now goodbye, write soon.

Envelope addressed to Dr. R. B. Stirling, West Feliciana, La.

Near Canton, Smith co. May 6th 1865
My Dear Brother

It has been a long time since I wrote or received a letter from you. I thought the old dislike to letter writing had returned as my last remained unanswered, but suppose now that was never received. I feel sorry because it had given me great pleasure to write to the children and I hoped they had been equally pleased, tell Kate that she has almost frightened me off from saying any thing to them or her as it would seem like taking in earnest the compliment that came in her letter to Kitty. it took me some time to rise up under their weight—but at length I thought they were only intended to make me feel comfortable while so far away from all the dear ones at home. tell her I am much obliged to her, but she must not repeat the dose, or I might think no one else knew how to manage children & she would feel the consequences by having long lectures how to bring up very little Willie sent over to her. dear little fellow I do want to see him. did you ever notice how I have been cut off from all my kin? none of my relatives outside of our immediate family, know any more of me than that there is such a person & the prospect is that your children & Kitty's grand children will say by & bye, Oh yes, my Father or my grand mother had such a sister but I never saw her—we were very agreeably surprised on Wednesday by a visit from Mr. C. Percy. I was sitting at the table very busy dressing the salad & talking to the servants when a gentleman walked in with his saddle bags on his arm. I looked up thinking it must be somebody I knew, but the light shone directly in my face & I couldn't see a feature of his. he came on round the table I rose up he said Mrs. Lobdell you don't know me by that time I had his hand & saw his face knew him & said Mr. Percy? ans yes Clarence Percy,³² yes,—is it possible, Clarence Percy, I felt almost like kissing him—he

had had a lonely time as Tirl³³ is very busy getting his train ready, Lewis & John were gone after beeves so that he had been left with us & his books, Kitty was over day before yesterday & he is going to see them tomorrow. Gov. Allen³⁴ sent him to hurry Tirl on with some Flour to Shreveport, and on some other business a little farther into Texas. We are much pleased with him, & sorry that his visit is so short.—Tirl is getting very impatient about his train, the weather has been so bad ever since he came the roads impassable the waters all high, and the people difficult to deal with, he seems thoroughly disgusted, the deer too were not so easy to kill, but he has killed two splendid Turkeys they each weighed 23 lbs. tell Mother that I am raising a good many chickens have nearly four hundred living. 'tis about all we do, or talk about besides our terrible reverses, the gardening, weaving³⁵ and the poultry keep us well employed—but what is to become of us hereafter if we are subjugated? What a sett of poor miserable slaves we will be, I can't bear to think of it & want to go off home where we never have to see or hear of a Yankee. Give my love to all our friends tell Mary Winter that Annie is going to school at Henderson about 16 miles from here she was very much pleased with her letter & will answer it when she comes here in the vacation. She has been home only twice since she commenced & both times brought company that took up all her time—write to me soon & tell me all you know about Lewis. I feel anxious to hear if he was engaged in late events. Kiss them all at home for me.

Love your affectionate Sister
A. M. Lobdell

Near Canton July 9th 1865
My Dear Mother

I can't let Tirl go home without sending a few lines although he will tell you all that can interest you and better than I can write it, but my letter will be more like a visit from myself & I know you would be disappointed without one the best thing to tell is that we are making arrangements to leave here and hope to spend our Christmas with you. it is so pleasant a prospect that it cheers us up very much under all the other dark and gloom things around us. we have no certain plans for the future. all we can propose is qualified with an if. the only thing we know is that we can't live here with any comfort so far from all we love we could (with slaves) make just a living here but our young people want to do more than live, and we don't want to live without them. I think that even if Mr. L. wished to stay we couldn't hire any of the negroes to stay with us. they all want to go home but whether to stay with us after we take them there remains to be seen I would prefer doing without them myself, but Lewis thinks he can make something by them if we can recover our lands. No one can tell how weary I feel, with the burden of attending to them & think that Mr L and myself are too old to care now about making money, if Lewis and L manage [to] do something, well and good, but I long for a quiet house. Mr. Lobdell is very feeble. I am very much afraid he will not bear the fatigue of that long journey, but am encouraged with the way he stood our travel out here he then improved all the time and was sick only after we were settled down—he bears our reverses better than I feared I feel anxious dear Mother to know how you stand them, and if dear Lewis and Jim have got home, if they are safe we have reason yet to be thankful that so much is still left to us and your young men may work their energies go to work in earnest and once more make comfortable and happy homes for themselves and families but they can never again talk of Southern chivalry. I feel that it is buried in the dust and that line of the song Maryland, "the despot's heel is on thy shore"³⁶ is always running in my head but it is the will of God that we must be subdued. he will bring good out of it although we now feel only the evil. I pray that we may learn to see his hand and bend ourselves to correct the sins for which he is punishing us.

There is only one thing that troubles me in leaving Texas, now I have Kitty near me and see her every few days, but then we will separate, and the chances are that we will seldom met again. the Dr is a kind affectionate husband and I think likes us all well enough to take pleasuring in bringing her to see us, but we may none of us have the means of going much from home & hers will be far away from mine. She has not disappointed me in her new life, but gives

me more and more pleasure as I see new calls on her duty. she is the best wife I know, if my other children all do as well, I will say indeed God has blessed me.—Dr Lewis makes me very uneasy about Annie, he thinks she is disposed to consumption and that without great care she will have it.³⁷ She has constant pain in her side and a fever almost every night, and been so for two or three months, he prescribes constant exercise, riding a great deal on horseback in such a way as to amuse and interest her and to give her a tonic made of cherry & dog wood bark³⁸ he does not say she has it yet & thinks it may be prevented and as she has no cough I feel encouraged. I am glad that Tirl and John are starting off, it shews [sic] that we will all get home, but I or I should say we will miss them, and I am very sorry that we are not ready to go with them. I do wish so much to hear from you, do get some of them to write, letters must surely come now. I wrote to Ruffin by Mr. Percy and hope he has received it long ago. that brings dear Annie³⁹ before me perhaps by this time her destiny is fixed & if it is as she wished I must say that in my judgment she has as fair a prospect for happiness as any one no one wishes more for her than I do. She is my own dear Annie & I can fully sympathize in all her pleasures and sorrows. I am willing to see her take her own choice & trust she will have no more sorrow than falls to this common lot of humanity. I like Mr. Percy & if he makes a good husband to her, can love him.—I feel so glad at the thought of getting among you all again that I can't think of any thing to write about from here, all I want is to stir up Lewis & his Pa to arrange affairs as rapidly as possible, when I hear of a chance to settle any business, I am in a flutter until I see them about it, and yet nothing is done there are two months yet to the time fixed to leave, but it seems to me that there is six months work to do. We are going to contract tomorrow with the negroes. I believe they will all go home with us and even those we sold have said they wanted to go. one gentleman sent his to us to say they had his approbation in coming to us, he has discharged all his negroes. I heard that yesterday they were in Canton trying to get work poor creatures it is a bad time to find places, the crops are all laid by and these people are as close as misers. I am afraid those we sold will come to us and we can't support them our supplies are just about out, those we have with us are loud in their complaints since they are freedmen. I suppose they think they can force us to extra expense for bacon & fat beef. they are living better than they did last summer & then there was no complaint—but I must give them the excuse that probably governs them last year they were healthy, but, now there is a great deal of that Texas scourge among them they call it flux⁴⁰ none of them have died yet but some have been on the very brink the change in matters has shown me a little more of my own nature. while they belonged to us I nursed them with great care now I doctor them to the best of my knowledge but do not feel the same interest. I know God will throw this up to me hereafter, but I will have to bear it as it is the truth. poor things I am sorry for them their friends have been most cruel to throw them on the world so unprepared to support themselves, if emancipation had been gradual so that both parties could have come easily into it I would have preferred it myself to slavery, but this is ruin to all & to the negro worse than the white man. I ought not to say to all, but only Southerners. I believe many a Yankee will make a big pretence [sic] on those home colonies,⁴¹ & all sorts of excuses will be made to find vagrants to put on them, but the heel is upon us & we must submit, let what will be the consequence. I pray that you my darling Mother & my other dear ones may not have to suffer much by it. give my love to all.

Your affectionate daughter

A. M. Lobdell

Near Canton July 9th 1865

Dear Unc

I think I owe you a letter and as cousin Tirl will start tomorrow for home I take the opportunity to pay my debt. Cousin John⁴² will stay tomorrow night with us and start the next morning to overtake the waggons [sic]. brother⁴³ intends making a contract with the negroes tomorrow evening so as to have him witness it, they are to work for their food and clothing until January, and brother told them that unless they would bind themselves to stay with us for a year after we get there, they will either have to stay behind or pay their own expenses home, those that papa sold are very

anxious to come back to us one of them is here now has been trying to make an arrangement with brother to let him come back, he has permission from his master to do so, he says his master tried to make the same kind of contract with his people but they thought they could do better and asked permission to try he gave three of them their papers and they were out a week only one succeeded because he had no family, the other two went back satisfied to make any contract he saw fit to propose; our negroes are so anxious to get back to Louisiana I think they will sign the contract without any difficulty, particularly as they know how hard it is to find places where they can make wages.

We expect to start for home in September and as I am so tired of Texas I wont be sorry when the time comes. I made a trip on the prairies early in the spring after cattle we went about a hundred miles west of the Trinity river and had to wait about two months before we could get any,⁴⁴ and then, when we were going home some soldiers who had returned from the army after Johnston's surrender⁴⁵, claimed them as government property,⁴⁶ but fortunately some of Walker's⁴⁷ men overtook us and took our side after brother had proved that they were private property, but I had a worse trouble than that while I was out there, living and shaking hands with those dirty people so long gave me a [pest?] that I have just gotten rid of, and that only by dilligent [sic] use of soap and sulphur.⁴⁸ Cousin Stirling cousin John, brother and I have been hunting frequently lately, we never go without starting deer & seldom come home without bringing one or more. I have killed only two since I have been here but haven't had one tenth as many chances as the others. cousin John generally gets about six chances and he and brother have killed eight or ten a piece cousin Tirl has killed a good many too, but they hunt twice to our once. The Dr. and Sister Kitty will leave here about the same time we do, and go first to north La. and next year probably to Mississippi so that we will have but few opportunities to see them. the Dr. is coming over tomorrow to witness the contract I expect Sister Kitty will come with him to see the last of cousin John. Brother says, when he gets home he will tell you all he knows as there are so many of writing.

With love to all I remain
Your affection nephew
John⁴⁹

¹ Biographical information included in the finding aid for the Lewis Stirling and Family Papers (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/1866.pdf>) and the John L. Lobdell and Family Papers (<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/4359.pdf>), accessed October 17, 2015.

² Andrew L. Leath, "The Prosperous Years, 1850-1890," *Chronicles of Smith County, Texas* 16, no. 1 (Summer 1977): 3-14.

³ According to Sarah T. Lobdell Allain, daughter of John L. Lobdell, "In December, 1862, my father with his family and slaves removed from his home in West Baton Rouge parish on account of its proximity to Port Hudson, then under siege. He went to the parish of Natchitoches, where he bought property and remained for a year. Then, just before General Banks' raid through the northern part of the state, went on to Texas, settling in Smith County." Elric Robinson, *Early Feliciana Politics* (St. Francisville, La.: St. Francisville Democrat, 1936), 101.

⁴ Sarah Turnbull Stirling (1789-1875), widow of Lewis Stirling (1786-1848), of Wakefield Plantation, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. She was Anne Stirling Lobdell's mother. LAWESTFE-L Archives, <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/LAWESTFE/2007-02/1170944427> (accessed October 17, 2015).

⁵ Probably William D. Winter, of West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 1: Free Population, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, 684.

⁶ Grace and her family were slaves. At the time of the 1860 census, John L. Lobdell owned 122 slaves and operated a sugar plantation. Robinson, *Early Feliciana Politics*, 101; Tom Blake, "West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, Largest Slaveholders from 1860 Slave Census Schedules and Surname Matches for African Americans on 1860 Census," <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ajac/lawbaton.htm> (accessed October 17, 2015).

⁷ On November 23, 1863, John L. Lobdell purchased four tracts of land—320 acres in the P. L. Trimble survey, 162 acres in the J. W. Powell survey, 102.5 acres in the Jackson Rector survey, and six acres less one acre reserved for a tanyard, including block 1, lots 1 and 6, block 11, block 12, and block 16 in Canton (now Omen), Smith County. Smith County Deed Records Book N, 365. This included the D. P. Fowler home in Omen (see map). Parts of the property are now under Lake Tyler East. For more information on Canton, Smith County, see: Andrew L. Leath, "The Prosperous Years, 1850-1890," *Chronicles of Smith County, Texas* 10 no. 1 (Summer 1977): 3-14.

⁸ There are several possibilities for this Lewis. Anne's brother was Lewis Turnbull Stirling (1819-1910), her eldest son was Lewis Stirling Lobdell (1829-1897), and her nephew was Lewis Stirling Hereford (1834-1880). It could also possibly be Irvin Edward Lewis, Richland Parish, Louisiana, who would marry Anne's daughter, Catherine "Kitty" Hereford Lobdell, on December 22, 1864, in Smith County. Smith County, Texas, Marriage Records, B, 244.

- ⁹ Additional slaves sold to acquire the land in Smith County.
- ¹⁰ A miller would grind farmers' grain and retain a percentage, usually 1/6, called a toll, for payment.
- ¹¹ By this point in the war, shoemakers were highly valued craftsmen because of the shortage of imported shoes due to the blockade.
- ¹² In 1860 George Eaton of Canton operated one of three distilleries in Smith County. Barrels might also have been purchased for the distillery at the Confederate pharmaceutical laboratory at what is now called Headache Springs, southeast of Tyler. Vicki Betts, *Smith County, Texas, in the Civil War* (Tyler, Tex.: Jack T. Greer Memorial Fund of the Smith County Historical Society, 1977), 6, 38.
- ¹³ For more on the movement of Louisiana slaves to Texas, see Dale Baum, "Slaves Taken to Texas for Safekeeping During the Civil War" in *The Fate of Texas: The Civil War and the Lone Star State*, ed. Charles D. Grear (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 83-103. According to Baum, Smith County saw an increase in 2,849 slaves between 1860 and 1864, a 65% increase in slaves taxed. For more on the practice of slave hiring, see Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- ¹⁴ John B. Hereford of the West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, age 19 in 1860. He enlisted in the Eighth Louisiana Infantry, was shot through the thigh at Gaines Mill and was then ordered to the Trans-Mississippi. On August 28, 1863 he requested leave to move his mother's slave property to Texas, and on September 8, 1863, while in Natchitoches he tendered his resignation from the Confederate Army due to disability. He had married Elizabeth "Lizzie" Johnson Robertson in 1861. John B. Hereford to Col. B. B. Anderson, Natchitoches, Louisiana, September 8, 1863. <https://www.fold3.com/image/72676600>, accessed October 17, 2015; "John Bronough Hereford," <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/1636539/person/24062282687/facts> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ¹⁵ Randall was probably one of John Lobdell's skilled slaves.
- ¹⁶ Probably Isabella Turnbull Semple (1785-1873), sister of Sarah Turnbull Stirling, and aunt of Ann Lobdell. "Bowman-Turnbull Family Papers," <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/5059.pdf> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ¹⁷ Ruffin Gray Sterling (1827-1881), brother of Anna Stirling Lobdell. Stanley Clisby Arthur and George Campbell Huchet de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, (New Orleans, La.: Harmanson, 1931), 265.
- ¹⁸ Dempsey James Cain (1838-1878), his father, Dempsey P. Cain (1795-1864) and stepmother, Mary Ann Hereford Cain owned a large tract of land on the west bank of the Mississippi River near the Lobdell estate, nearly opposite Port Hudson, Louisiana. D. J. Cain was listed as absent without leave since November 25, 1863 from Company B, First Louisiana Cavalry. By January, 1865, he was living in Smith County. Mildred Seab Ezell, *Cain* (Athens, Ga.: the author, 1988), 4-5, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/ms/amite/history/books/cain/cain001.txt> (accessed October 17, 2015); Smith County District Court Minutes, case C-1. D. J. Cain, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Louisiana, NARA, RG109, <https://www.fold3.com/image/271/64711342> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ¹⁹ The only Brown in West Baton Rouge Parish in the 1860 census was Joseph Brown, age 25, who lived in the Lobdell's Store area. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 1: Free Population, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, 683.
- ²⁰ Dempsey P. Cain moved from West Baton Rouge Parish to Smith County, Texas, in 1863, bringing his slaves, nine men, thirteen women, and eighteen children, appraised at \$13,150, with him. He rented the Charles Little place on the Seven Leagues grant in the southwestern part of the county. Smith County District Court records, case C-1.
- ²¹ Dempsey P. Cain died in Smith County, July 25, 1864, gravesite unknown. After Cain's death William Thedford applied to be administrator, complaining that the estate consisted "mostly of slaves which are doing much injury to the surrounding neighborhood." Ibid.
- ²² M. S. Rhea, female, age 33, in 1860 West Feliciana Parish census. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 1: Free Population, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 132.
- ²³ Sarah Winter, born about 1833. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Schedule 1: Free Population, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, 684.
- ²⁴ Probably Ruffin Stirling (1827-1881), his mother's brother, a physician. Later in the letter John L. Lobdell Jr. refers to his "practice." Arthur and Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 265.
- ²⁵ Probably malaria, common in the South at that time and marked by intermittent fevers. The letter ends with a reference to being under the influence of quinine, the preferred treatment for malaria if available.
- ²⁶ By August 1864 there were many refugees in East Texas, particularly from Louisiana and Arkansas, having fled before the invading federal armies during the Red River campaign the previous spring. For the account of an earlier Louisiana refugee in Smith County, see Kate Stone, *Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University, 1955).
- ²⁷ During the 1860s East Texas developed a reputation for grape and wine production. In 1866, J. G. Woldert of Tyler made over three hundred gallons of wine, and the following year he planned to send thirty barrels to New Orleans. That same year George Yarbrough, also of Tyler, had a cellar with several hundred gallons fermenting. "He has seven distinct manipulations for manufacturing, producing a marked difference in the flavor, color, aroma, etc." *Harrison Flag*, August 30, 1866; *Flake's Bulletin*, December 17, 1867; *Tyler Reporter* quoted in the *Texas Republican*, September 21, 1867.
- ²⁸ Corn blades pulled from the stalk and wrapped into bundles for animal feed.
- ²⁹ According to the *Tyler Reporter*, November 10, 1864, the government price for wheat was \$5.00 per bushel.
- ³⁰ Commonly called dipping snuff. See Vicki Betts, "The 'Social Dip': Tobacco Use by Mid-19th Century Southern Women," <http://www.uttyler.edu/vbetts/snuff.htm> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ³¹ Lewis Stirling Lobdell (1829-1897). "Lewis Stirling Lobdell," <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/20935907/person/20467928258/facts> (accessed October 17, 2015).

- ³² Clarence Percy (1836-1909), of St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. He was married to Annie Matilda Hereford. Stanley and Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 314.
- ³³ Probably a family nickname for either James Stirling Hereford (1843-1891) or Lewis Stirling Hereford (1834-1880), both sons of Ann Lobdell's sister Catherine. "Lewis Stirling Hereford" <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/20139583/person/5074681744/facts> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ³⁴ Governor Henry Watkins Allen. Allen, governor of Louisiana from January 26, 1864 until the end of the war, was authorized by the Confederate state legislature to purchase food and other supplies for the needy of his state. See John D. Winters, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University, 1963), 318.
- ³⁵ Weaving had become necessary by the end of the war for many Southern women because the blockade had cut off most access to factory cloth except at high prices demanded by those who ran the blockade or traded through the lines. See Paul Mitchel Marks, *Hands to the Spindle: Texas Women and Home Textile Production, 1822-1880* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).
- ³⁶ The first line from the song "Maryland, My Maryland," a favorite with Confederates and still the Maryland state song.
- ³⁷ Annie Lobdell Mhoon will live until 1922. "Annie Alston Lobdell Mhoon," <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=103193592> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ³⁸ Dr. Francis Porcher, in the *Charleston Mercury*, April 29, 1863, offered the following recipe incorporating dogwood and wild cherry: "A tonic compound, as advised by the herbalists, is made with the bark of the root of dogwood, colombo (Fraseria), poplar, each six ounces; bark of wild cherry, six ounces; leaves of thoroughwort, four ounces; cayenne pepper, four ounces--sifted and mixed. Dose, a teaspoonful, in warm or cold water, repeated." The local Confederate pharmaceutical laboratory at Headache Springs advertised for both dogwood and wild cherry bark in the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, October 19, 1863.
- ³⁹ Anne Mathilde Hereford (1836-1898) married Clarence Percy January 18, 1866. "West Feliciana Parish Marriages," <http://laahgp.genealogyvillage.com/LaMarriages/wfp3.html> (accessed October 17, 2015).
- ⁴⁰ Flux is now called diarrhea.
- ⁴¹ For more on Northern "colonies" on Louisiana plantations, see J. Thomas May, "Continuity and Change in the Labor Program of the Union Army and the Freedmen's Bureau," *Civil War History* 17, no. 3 (September 1971): 245-254.
- ⁴² Probably John Bronaugh Hereford, son of Ann Lobdell's sister Catherine.
- ⁴³ Lewis Stirling Lobdell.
- ⁴⁴ For more on the cattle industry in Texas during the Civil War see Carol Taylor, "Feed the Troops or Fight the Drought: The Dilemma Texas Beef Contractors Faced in 1861-1865," in *The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas During the Civil War*, ed. Kenneth W. Howell (Denton, Tex.: University of North Texas Press, 2009): 287-300.
- ⁴⁵ Joseph E. Johnston, who surrendered the Confederate Army of the Tennessee in North Carolina on April 26, 1865.
- ⁴⁶ At the end of the war many Confederate soldiers claimed what they considered government property as a substitute for their long overdue pay. See Brad R. Clappitt, "The Breakup: The Collapse of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Army in Texas, 1865" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 108 no. 4 (April 2005), 498-534.
- ⁴⁷ John George Walker, of Walker's Texas Division, which disbanded in May, 1865 at Hempstead, Texas. Lester Newton Fitzhugh, "Walker's Texas Division," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qkw01>), accessed October 17, 2015. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- ⁴⁸ Possibly scabies or mites, commonly called "camp itch" and usually treated with sulfur. James Robertson, *The Untold Civil War: Exploring the Human Side of War* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2011), 128.
- ⁴⁹ According to Sarah Lobdell Allain, "In December, 1865, he [John L. Lobdell, her father] came back to his old home, bringing his slaves [now free] with him, his health completely broken and his fortune ruined. He died in less than two years after our return" on September 5, 1867. Robinson, *Early Feliciana Parish*, 101.